DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 911 IR 056 186

AUTHOR Koss, Andrea Inez
TITLE Information Needs of Kent State University Masters of Business Administration Students.
PUB DATE 14 Oct 96
NOTE 37p.; Master's Research Paper, Kent State University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Libraries; *Business Administration Education; Graduate Students; Higher Education; *Information Needs; Information Sources; Information Technology; Internet; Library Instruction; *Masters Programs; *Student Attitudes; *Student Research; Student Surveys; Study Habits; Tables (Data); *User Needs (Information)
IDENTIFIERS *Kent State University OH

ABSTRACT

This research paper addresses the information needs of Kent State University's (Ohio) Master's of Business Administration (MBA) students. Data was collected from the students using a focused information needs questionnaire, and then summarized. The results were analyzed to determine which tools were being used by MBA students when they research business related topics. Findings show that these students use the library at Kent State University more than other libraries. Despite numerous resources available to be used specifically for business related research, the MBA students primarily used current periodicals and ABI/Inform. The students were familiar with using the Internet as well as computers in general. The students noted that formal research training about business resources would be highly useful. The most prominent finding was related to the fact that the students take their professors' advice in regards to accessing business research tools and apparently few academics are aware of the wide variety of applicable technologies in the Kent State University library and business-specific reference books. Therefore, these resources are not being recommended to students. Because of this general lack of awareness about business related research tools available in the Kent State library, both MBA students and professors could benefit from graduate level bibliographic instruction. Eight tables show responses to the survey. The cover letter and a sample questionnaire are appended. (Contains 15 references.) (Author/AEF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 401 911

INFORMATION NEEDS OF KENT STATE UNIVERSITY MASTERS OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the Kent State University School of Library Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the dual degree Master of Library Science and Master of Business Administration.

by
Andrea Inez Koss
October 14, 1996

IR056186

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
R. DuMont
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

Many individuals have attended formal programs of graduate study and conducted research. However, research has not been conducted to identify the areas of strength and weakness regarding library materials provided to graduate students who use them when conducting research. Specifically, a study of Masters of Business Administration students has not been conducted to define their information needs when conducting business related research and the tools used in this specific type of research. This research paper has addressed the information needs of Kent State University's Masters of Business Administration students. The data has been collected by having the MBA students voluntarily complete a focused information needs questionnaire. After receiving the MBA students' responses, the data from the questionnaires were statistically summarized. The results were analyzed to determine which tools were being used by MBA students when they research business related topics. The research identified key areas of strengths and weaknesses regarding how the MBA students at Kent State University access information. In summary, the findings of this research have shown that these students use the library at Kent State University the most as compared to other libraries. This research unveiled the fact that despite numerous resources available to be used specifically for business related research, the MBA students primarily used current periodicals and ABI/Inform. The MBA students were familiar with using the Internet as well as computers in general. In addition, the MBA students noted that formal research training about business resources would be highly useful. The most prominent finding was related to the fact that the MBA students take their professors' advice regarding access to business research tools. Due to the responses of the MBA students, it appears that even though the Kent State University library is equipped with a wide variety of tools such as Compaq Disclosure, Lexis/Nexis, and business-specific reference books, apparently few academics are aware of these tools and, therefore, are unable to recommend them to the students. Because of the general lack of awareness about business related research tools made available by the library at Kent State University, both MBA students and professors could benefit from graduate level bibliographic instruction.

Master's Research Paper by

Andrea Inez Koss

B. A., International Studies, Miami University, 1990

M. L. S. and M. B. A., Kent State University, 1996

Approved by

Advisor Lois Buttlar Date 10-21-96

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	iv
I. Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Defined Terms	3
II. Literature Review	4
III. Methodology	9
Limitations	9
IV. Analysis of Data	11
V. Conclusion	22
Appendix A	26
Appendix B	27
Bibliography	30

TABLES

Table 1 11
Question 2
Distribution of MBA Students by Age

Table 2 13
Question 5
Distribution of Libraries Used by MBA Students

Table 3 14
Question 6
Distribution of MBA Students and Type of Library Used Most

Table 4 15
Question 7
Distribution and Rank of MBA Students Means of Access

Table 5 16
Question 8
Distribution of MBA Students Use of Materials

Table 6 17
Question 10
Distribution of MBA Students Use of Databases and Library Loans

Table 7 18
Question 11
Distribution of MBA Students Number of References Printed

Table 8 19
Question 12
Distribution of MBA Students' Information Sources

I. INTRODUCTION

The decade of the 1990s is being touted as that of the third wave or the information revolution (Toffler 1980). During the 1960s, technology was developing into the rapid search and delivery information systems of the present. The 1970s and 1980s were further stages of technological development. In addition, the United States labor and workforce were implementing information systems to provide better management of industrial operations. Now the United States is determining its place and role within the global community of technology. Due to its technologically based role in the global setting, the United States needs competitive, competent, highly skilled managers to continue its progress as a major competitor within the globally interdependent society of the present.

Advancing with today's technology is the production of information. Corporations are speeding their research and development processes because of cooperative collaboration with experts in the same fields (Cronin 1994). Home personal computer users can reduce their physical travel for information by simply having a modem connection to places like an online database, a public or academic library or the Internet. The sharing and rapid dissemination of information is also affecting academia. However, the link between the qualitative and accurate types of information with which students, specifically Master's of Business Administration graduate students, are familiar and the corporate information expectations of these students have not been clearly defined. It is

important to determine these needs so that the MBA student of today can be a proficient, highly skilled decision maker of tomorrow within the business setting.

There has been little research conducted thus far which identifies the MBA graduate students' information needs. One study was conducted by Doralyn Hickey Edwards at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1994 (Edwards 1994). This study focused on the information needs of MBA students and the students' attitudes toward information. However, this research did not assess what the business realm utilizes in meeting its information needs or its expectations of the MBA graduates information knowledge.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the information needs and research skills of Kent State University Masters of Business Administration students. This study will provide a statistical means of analysis of which sources and types of information are currently in use by the Kent State University MBA students. Once compiled, this research should be of value to Kent State University librarians and librarians affiliated with special libraries, particularly corporate libraries.

Defined Terms

For the purpose of this study, MBA "information needs" are defined as any major activities or resources which a student must utilize to obtain references for the purpose of class assignment completion, research, or individual projects.

The term "MBA student" will encompass all students who are currently enrolled at the Kent State University Graduate School of Business Administration. This includes both full and part-time students.

"Business information needs" can be defined as the knowledge, skills, abilities and resources utilized by corporations in their decision making.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

When locating information relevant to this topic, several different sources were searched. These sources were **Library Literature, Library and Information Science Abstracts, WorldCat, ABI/Inform, Dissertation Abstracts, KentLink, OhioLink**, and **CleveNet**.

Although many library usage studies have been conducted, the samples have not focused on either graduate or MBA students. At San Jose State University a library user survey was conducted to collect information regarding student and faculty research and information needs (Whitlatch 1980). This survey revealed that 34.7 percent of all full-time students seldom or never use the San Jose State University Library. It also found that 45.8 percent of all part-time students seldom or never use the library. Further findings indicated that faculty and students in professional programs such as business tend to make less use of the library than students and faculty in the liberal arts programs. From these findings it is apparent that statistics about library usage were compiled, however the research did not have any findings regarding the identification of the users' information needs.

Another study focused on part-time MBA students usage of business sources at the College of Continuing Education at the University of Rhode Island or CCE (Sheridan 1985). The findings of this study determined that a specialized form of bibliographic instruction was necessary for the part-time MBA students. The study found that after the librarian had carefully examined the special perspective of the business students, a

mutually beneficial relationship between student, professor, and librarian began to flourish. The researcher noted that this "decision support system" could then be applied to the library. After acknowledging the specialized needs of the MBA students and professors, the librarian created a list of forty-four (44) business reference sources which were available at the CCE and distributed it to the students. From this research it was apparent that the students relied heavily upon the resources at the CCE to successfully complete their assignments. However, this study did not relate the students' information needs to their reasons for making the various resource selections. The part-time MBA students utilized ***Moody's Manuals***, ***Dun and Bradstreet Directories***, ***Value Line***, and ***RMA Annual Statement Studies*** and ***Industry Surveys*** but why they had chosen these sources in particular was not studied.

In contrast to Sheridan's research, an intensive study of New England residents' information seeking was conducted in 1982 (Chen and Hernon 1982). One aspect of this study discovered that out of the New England residents polled, the most important criteria for information were 27.9 percent accuracy, 23.6 percent understandability, 18.9 percent monetary cost, 17.1 percent cost of time, and 6.6 percent up-to-dateness. Such information seeking data would be beneficial to determine from the viewpoint of MBA students. These criteria could better clarify the MBA students' information needs. The information seeking patterns further noted that out of those individuals surveyed, 13.5 percent had technical job-related information needs, 10.0 percent had getting/changing job-related information needs. Of those who noted a technical job-related information need, 27.0 percent were between the ages twenty-five and forty-four. Of that 27.0 percent, 23.0 percent were college graduates or had education beyond college. Although

these statistics are somewhat broad and outdated, they do show that information needs in general and employers' technical information needs are related. The extent to which MBA students' information needs and that of the corporate environment are related was not studied.

One study regarding the information needs of managers was conducted at the University of Pittsburgh in 1993 (Maura 1993). Data regarding how the decision making process is influenced by the nature and relevance of the information available to managers were collected through using a questionnaire. The study was based on 1. the characteristics and differences of the Puerto Rican manufacturing industries top, middle, and junior managers, 2. the information used that satisfied these managers' information needs, and 3. the managers' perception of information professionals. This study was very specific because it focused on the information needs of managers in the private manufacturing industry in Puerto Rico. A study of this same topic does not appear to have been conducted focusing on United States private manufacturing industry.

With regard to business, it has been identified that two basic needs for information exist at the group level regardless of the type of organization (Kibirige 1983). These are that the organization needs information about itself and its own operations and it needs external information about its environment. An information need is also identified as a "dynamic feature of the information-transfer process" (Kigirige 1983). A similar idea was presented in a paper at the fifty-ninth Aslib Annual Conference (Wilson 1987). It noted that for the majority of businesses, information means internal information. The day-to-day functions of a company depend upon the effective management of the internal rather than external information resource. Despite the fact that businesses are divided into many

areas like productions, personnel, sales, marketing, and finance, each of these areas tends to overlap significantly in their needs for information (White 1986).

It is not enough to acquire information for decision making in the corporate arena. What is now essential is that value-added information needs be identified. Value added information can guide business clients in utilizing the company's available services. Such information can then benefit the company in the reduction of its costs or the increase in its business (Dyer and Tseng 1988). In order to achieve the compilation, assessment and dissemination of such information, faculty at the MBA institutions need to emphasize the importance of information analysis skills to entering graduate students (Bigelow 1991).

With regard to what employers are looking for in the MBA graduate, a trend that has been identified is the increased need for the ability to interpret and present raw data or value-added information (Dyer and Tseng 1988). Such a trend cannot be met without determining where the MBA students' information needs are adequately being facilitated. It has been suggested that business students should be apprised of their competence in managerial skills, trained to enhance those skills and reassessed to ascertain progress in those skills (Bigelow 1991).

After reviewing the resources that are available about the information needs of the MBA students and the relationship of these needs with corporate information needs, it is apparent that there is a need for more research about this topic. A correlation of these research findings will identify how such needs can best be addressed. By identifying the specific Kent State University MBA students' information needs and those of the corporate environment, the theoretical world of academia can be meshed with the

practical, applied world of business. Therefore this can perhaps ease the transition from the scholastic setting to the corporate setting for the MBA graduates.

III. METHODOLOGY

To assess the Kent State University MBA students' information needs, a survey was distributed to all such students enrolled during the Summer I semester of 1996 for a total of eighty-five (85) students. The survey was inserted in the full and part-time MBA students' mailboxes located at the Graduate School of Business Administration. The students were given a brief project description in the form of a formal letter and a survey (Appendix A). Each student was asked to complete only one survey (Appendix B). The completed survey was requested to be returned within two (2) weeks. A note of reminder to fill out the survey was placed in the students' mailboxes ten days after the initial mailbox stuffing. Results of the survey were statistically tabulated.

Once the completed questionnaires were returned, the data was coded and entered into an EDD data entry program. SPSS was used to calculate frequencies and percentages between variables and chi-square tests were conducted to analyze relationships.

Limitations

By gauging the MBA students' opinions through a survey method, the process is somewhat limiting. It does not allow the researcher and respondent to interact. Additionally, because the students may complete the survey at any time, they might not respond as accurately as they would if replying while actually conducting their own business research. They might forget the various resources that they had used when

researching. MBA students surveyed were limited to those in one university setting, therefore, the ifndings are not necessarily generalizable to all MBA students.

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

After the MBA students returned their questionnaires, the data was entered into an EDD program. The frequencies and percentages were calculated and Chi-square tests were conducted using SPSS. Each of the eighteen questions were summarized in terms of frequencies and percentages. Seventy (70) questionnaires were completed for a response rate of 82.4 percent. . Gender and age were utilized in various Chi-square tests. Of the seventy responses, 39 or 55.7 percent of the respondents are male and 31or 44.3 percent are female.

The range of the respondents' ages had the highest percentage of the Summer I semester students (22 or 31.4 percent) falling in the age 26-29 bracket (see Table 1).

Table 1: Question 2

Distribution of MBA Students by Age

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
20 - 25	12	17.1
26 - 29	22	31.4
30 - 35	16	22.9
36 - 39	7	10.0
40 - 45	8	11.4
46 - 49	4	5.7
50 and over	1	1.4
Total	70	100.0

This data was not surprising since the majority of students in this age range seem to complete the MBA program within two years, which would necessitate their attendance of summer session courses.

The third question posed to the MBA students asked in which year was the student currently enrolled in the MBA program. Out of 69 responses, 27 or 39.1 percent were in their first year of the MBA program. Twenty-nine or 42.0 percent of the respondents were in their second year of the MBA program, while thirteen or 18.8 percent were classified as "other." The other responses included:

5 or 7.2% who were third year MBA students

1 or 1.45% who was a fourth year MBA student

1 or 1.45% who was a PhD student in Administration

1 or 1.45% who was a Master of Media Management student

1 or 1.45% who was a sixth year MBA student

1 or 1.45% who was a transfer student

1 or 1.45% who was part-time evening student

1 or 1.45% who was a Master of Accounting student

1 or 1.45% who was a dual MBA and Nursing student.

When asked about their current student status in question four of the questionnaire, of the seventy respondents, 19 or 27.1 percent were full-time students and 51 or 72.9 percent were part-time. For the purpose of this study, a full-time student was a student who was enrolled for nine hours or more of credit courses. A part-time student was one who was enrolled for less than nine hours of credit courses. The number of part-

time students was not surprising for a summer semester group of respondents since many of the part-time students take course work year round.

Question five asked the students to indicate all libraries which they utilized for business school work and research. The responses were as follows:

Table 2: Question 5

Distribution of Libraries Used by MBA Students

Type of Library	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Kent State University	64	91.4
Local Library	34	48.6
Other Academic	12	17.1
Special/Corporate	3	4.3
None of These	1	1.4
Other	9	12.9

Of the nine respondents who indicated that they used "other" libraries, what the respondents considered to be "libraries" in the traditional sense of the word varied greatly. For example, three of the "other" respondents noted that they used the Internet. One respondent noted home computer as a response. Another noted a hospital library as a resource. Further, a respondent noted the World Wide Web as a library. Three other libraries, which would most likely have been classified under special, other academic, and local were Children's Hospital of Akron, Ohio, Baldwin Wallace College, in Berea. Ohio and Akron Public library in Ohio. As indicated by the responses, the specific type of library used and how it is classified might not have been clear to the respondents.

In relation to question five, the respondents were asked to indicate which library they used most. Fifty-one (77.3%) of the respondents indicated that they used the library at Kent State University the most (see Table 3).

Table 3: Question 6

Distribution of MBA Students and Type of Library Used Most

Library Type	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Kent State University	**51**	**77.3**
Local	10	15.2
Other Academic	4	6.1
Special	1	1.4
None	0	0.0
Total	66	100.0

Question seven asked what means of access did the student use to search for information. The student was to indicate whether the means of access was used frequently, infrequently or never. Table 4 indicates the data received.

Table 4: Question 7

Distribution and Rank of MBA Students Means of Access

Means of Access		Frequently	Infrequently	Never
Ask Library Staff				
	Frequency	34	32	4
	Percentage	48.6	45.7	5.7
Ask a Professor				
	Frequency	14	34	21
	Percentage	20.3	49.3	30.4
Use a Computer				
	Frequency	60	9	1
	Percentage	85.7	12.9	1.4
Microforms				
	Frequency	8	22	37
	Percentage	11.9	32.8	55.2
Home/Office Modem				
	Frequency	23	22	22
	Percentage	34.3	32.8	32.8

From the data for question seven, it appears that the most used means of access of information is acquired by use of a computer (60 or 85.7 percent) while the least used means of access to information are microforms (8 or 11.9 percent).

Question eight dealt with determining what materials the students tended to use when searching for information. The responses were ranked as frequently, infrequently, or never.

Table 5: Question 8

Distribution of MBA Students Use of Materials

Type of Material	Frequently	Infrequently	Never
	Frequency, Percent	Frequency, Percent	Frequency, Percent
Books in Stacks	25 (f), 36.8%	33(f), 48.5%	10 (f), 14.7%
Bound Periodicals	51(f), 75.0%	14 (f), 20.6%	3 (f), 4.4%
Business Reference Books	38 (f), 55.1%	25 (f), 36.2%	6 (f), 8.7%
Current Periodicals	57 (f), 83.8%	9 (f), 13.2%	2 (f), 2.9%
Dissertations and Theses	3 (f), 4.4%	22 (f), 32.4%	43 (f), 63.2%
Government Documents	7 (f), 10.3%	28 (f), 41.2%	33 (f), 48.5%
Newspapers	27 (f), 39.1%	33 (f), 47.8%	9 (f), 13.0%

From this data, it appears that the most frequently used materials are current periodicals. The next most frequently used materials are bound periodicals. The least used materials are dissertations and theses (see Table 5).

In question nine, the type of information most frequently searched was found to be information about industries (22 or 33.8 percent) which tied with business theory (22 or

33.8 percent) which was followed by information about companies (17 or 26.2 percent) and last information about a specific product (4 or 6.2 percent).

Question ten asked the students to note all types of databases which they have used. Of the indicated responses, it appears that ABI Inform, Inter-library loan and OhioLink loan are utilized the most and about equally (from 52.2 to 54.5%). On the other hand, Compaq Disclosure appears to be used the least (by 7 or 11.7% of the respondents), or if it has been used by the students, then they were not familiar with its title or name (see Table 10).

Table 6: Question 10

Distribution of MBA Students Use of Databases and Loans

Type of Technology	Yes	No	Not Sure
	Frequency, Percent	Frequency, Percent	Frequency, Percent
Compaq Disclosure	7 (f), 11.7	39 (f), 65.0	14 (f), 23.3
Lexis/Nexis	24 (f), 39.3	28 (f), 45.9	9 (f), 14.8
ABI/Inform	36 (f), 54.5	23 (f), 34.8	7 (f), 10.6
Inter-library Loan	36 (f), 54.5	27 (f), 40.9	3 (f), 4.5
OhioLink Loan	36 (f), 52.2	29 (f), 42.0	4 (f), 5.8

When asked to indicate the number of citations that they usually print, the 69 students noted that they print citations as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7: Question 11

Distribution of MBA Students Number of References Printed

Citations	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
0	5	7.2
1 - 10	24	34.8
11 - 20	29	42.0
21 - 30	7	10.2
31 - and greater	4	5.8
Total	69	100.0

From these data, it appears that the majority of MBA students print anywhere from one to twenty citations.

The MBA students were next asked to indicate which of six types of information sources they relied upon in their studies. The MBA students were also asked to indicate whether the source was very important, of little importance, or not important.

Table 8: Question 12

Distribution of MBA Students' Information Sources

Type of Source	Very Important	Little Importance	Not Important
	Frequency, Percent	Frequency, Percent	Frequency, Percent
Books	46 (f), 67.6	21 (f), 30.9	1 (f), 1.5
Periodicals	61 (f), 88.4	7 (f), 10.1	1 (f), 1.4
Online Library Catalog	35 (f), 51.5	28 (f), 41.2	5 (f), 7.4
Materials from Professor/Teacher	46 (f) 66.7	23 (f), 33.3	0
Books or Course Packs Purchased for the Class	39 (f), 56.5	29 (f), 42.0	1 (f), 1.4
Computer Databases	36 (f), 53.7	20 (f), 29.9	11 (f), 16.4

From these responses, it can be concluded that the most important source relied upon by the MBA students surveyed are periodicals. The second most relied upon sources are books followed closely by materials from a professor/teacher (see Table 8).

Next, the MBA students were asked to indicate which database they used most frequently. From the 68 responses, the most frequently used database was ABI/Inform (24 or 35.3 percent). The second most used database was Periodical Abstracts (19 or 27.9 percent). The third most used database was Dissertation and Abstracts (11or 16.2 percent). The remaining databases were Compaq Disclosure (5 or 7.4 percent) and Lexis/Nexis (5or 7.4 percent).

When asked whether the MBA students' future employers would require them to conduct any type of research or study when employed after graduation, 34 (48.6 percent) of seventy respondents thought that it was likely. Those who thought that it was highly

likely were 24or 34.4 percent, and those who thought that it was unlikely were 12 or 17.1 percent. From these responses, it can be concluded that many of the MBA students find that it will be likely for them to be required to conduct some type of research for their employers.

Question fifteen asked whether the MBA students thought that some kind of formal research training about business resources to improve their skills would be useful. Of the seventy respondents, 37or 52.9 percent noted that such training would be highly useful. Another 28 or 40.0 percent noted that training would be somewhat useful. The remaining 5 or 7.1 percent did not think that formal research training would be necessary.

To determine whether the MBA students had used the Internet to conduct any business related searches, 53 or 75.7 percent noted that they have conducted searches on the Internet. The remaining 17or 24.3 percent had not conducted business searched via the Internet. Of those who were surveyed, question seventeen asked them to indicate whether they had had success in obtaining the information for which they had searched on the Internet. Of the 64 who responded to this question, 49 or 76.6 percent noted that they had had success while 15 or 23.4 percent did not.

To determine where the MBA students intended to be geographically located after graduating from the Kent State University program, 35 or 50.0 percent noted that they intended to be employed in Ohio. Those who intended to be employed in another state in the United States numbered 20or 28.6 percent. Six students (8.6 percent) intended to be employed in a foreign country and nine or 12.9 percent were undecided.

Chi-square test of the relationship between gender and means of access, type of information frequently searched, future employer research requirements, need for formal

research training, and internet searching was conducted. The only significant relationship was found between gender and asking a professor as a means of access used to search for information (chi-square = 6.25903, P = .04, degrees of freedom = 2, sample size = 69).

The age group categories were analyzed regarding materials used when searching for information, future employer research requirements, the need for formal research training, Internet searching, and future geographic location for employment. Chi-square analyses revealed that there is also a significant relationship between age and asking a professor as a means of accessing information (chi-square = 23.62729, P = .02, degrees of freedom = 12, sample size = 69).

V. CONCLUSION

Through analysis of the Chi-square data, it appears that the Kent State University MBA students rely upon their professors instead of librarians to act as a means of access when searching for information. Due to this type of access used, the MBA students appear to limit their base of knowledge regarding business-specific research tools. This was indicated by the MBA students lack of use of business reference books and databases. To augment the MBA students research skills and their awareness of the business tools available, librarians should promote their usefulness on a much greater level to both the professors and the MBA students. By marketing the updated, newly released or existing business resources to both professors at the school of business administration and the MBA students on a per semester basis, the librarians would be better recognized by the professors and MBA students. Further, the vast array of business resources available at the Kent State University library would also be better utilized. To achieve a better appreciation for the librarians as well as the library resources available, bibliographic instruction could function as an effective conduit to meet the professors' research expectations and the information needs of the Kent State University MBA students.

As indicated by the responses generated from the questionnaire, 42 percent of the MBA students were second year students. Of the MBA students who responded, 72.9 percent were part-time students. Since such a large percentage of the respondents are part-time MBA students at the Kent State University MBA program, it would be expected that these individuals would not conduct their scholarly research at the Kent State

University library. However, those who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they do use the Kent State University library the most when compared to other libraries, like their local public library. Because of the high usage of the Kent State University library (77.3 percent) it could be assumed that these students would be familiar with the wide variety of business tools available to them for research. Contrary to this assumption, the respondents noted that they used primarily current periodicals and ABI/Inform for their research activities. Databases such as Periodical Abstracts, Dissertation and Abstracts, Compaq Disclosure, and Lexis/Nexis are seldom used. Because of the under-usage of these various business related research tools by MBA students, these tools are likely to be completely abandoned by the Kent State University selections and acquisitions staff. Therefore, it is imperative that something be done to curve the awareness levels of graduate students, such as the MBA students as well as professors, regarding the content, coverage and overall capacity of these important research tools.

From the analysis of the data compiled from the questionnaire, it is apparent that the computer usage was high as a means of access to research materials (85.7 percent). In addition, the Internet was used as a means of searching for business related information by 75.7 of the respondents. Because many of the MBA students are familiar with computers and the Internet, more promotional information and displays at the Kent State University library could be used to target the graduate students as a means of familiarizing and publicizing library-related business research tools, such as Compaq Disclosure and Lexis/Nexis. An awareness campaign focused on graduate students as well as their professors would increase usage of the Kent State University library business tools that currently appear to be under-utilized. In addition to heightening the usage of business-

related tools, the knowledge base and information gathered by the MBA students would have greater quality and depth.

Since 48.6 percent of the respondents thought that it would be likely that their future employers would require them to conduct some form of research and 52.9 percent of the respondents felt that formal research training would be highly useful, business related research training should be integrated formally into the Kent State University MBA program. This could be accomplished by a joint effort of school of business administration and the Kent State University library staff. Such training could take place in the form of a required or mandatory workshop, offered on a pass/fail basis during the new MBA students first term in the Kent State University MBA program.

Further, the respondents indicated that they had searched most frequently for information about industries and business theory, it would be highly beneficial for the new MBA students to be required to attend a formal workshop. By offering such a workshop, the Kent State University library would benefit from the advantage of more graduate level students using the university's library. The professors would benefit by obtaining intellectual information provided by the MBA students in-depth research. In the long-run, the Kent State University MBAs future employers would benefit from the acquired research skills and knowledge base which the students have developed throughout their course of study at Kent State University. In addition, once these MBA students skills are promoted on a wide-spread basis, this could promote the Kent State University MBA program in general and even increase enrollment as well as encourage Corporate 1000 companies to be interested in more Kent State University MBA graduates for employment.

By having the Kent State University librarians offer a mandatory workshop or conduct bibliographic instruction, the MBA students, the professors, the librarians and future employers could reap short and long-term benefits. In the short-term, the MBA students will be able to better understand and comprehend the business world because they will be broadening their base of knowledge by using a variety of business-related research tools. The professors will benefit by receiving thoroughly researched compositions which encompass a gamut of resources to provide the most accurate information. In the long-term, the librarians will benefit by having the MBA students and professors understand their role more clearly as a source of knowledge regarding business-related research tools. Employers of Kent State University MBA graduates will benefit in the long-term because they will have an individual working with them who is accustomed to conducting comprehensive research and who knows where to find the best information available.

The current spectrum of information is continuously taking quantum leaps forward. If MBA students in the university setting do not take full advantage of the vast offering of business related resources such as those found at Kent State University's library, then they will find themselves struggling to reach the top of the corporate ladder. A forward thinking, progressive approach in response to the lack of business related research skills, as noted by the research that was conducted, must be led by the Kent State University librarians so that both faculty and students become more aware of their value-added expertise and knowledge.

APPENDIX A

RE: Information Needs of Kent State University MBA Students

July 8, 1996

Dear Scholar:

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. As part of the requirements for my master's degree I am conducting a study about the information needs of Kent State University MBA students. The attached questionnaire elicits information that will assist me in discerning the major sources of information used by MBA students to complete assignments and to conduct their personal research. This information would be useful to both theorists and practitioners in the fields of library and information science and business.

Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed as you do not need to sign your name to this questionnaire; only the investigator has access to this survey data. There is no penalty of any kind if you should choose to not participate in this study or if you would withdraw from participation at any time. While your cooperation is essential to the success of this study, it is, of course, voluntary.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (216) 988-5085 or Dr. Lois Buttlar, my research advisor, at (330) 672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University, you may contact Dr. M. Thomas Jones, at (330) 672-2851.

Thank you very much for your cooperation; it is much appreciated. You may return the questionnaire to my mailbox which is **#105** no later than ***Friday, July 19, 1996.***

Sincerely,

Andrea Koss
Graduate Student

attached

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your sex?
   _____Male _____Female

2. In which of the following age groups are you?
   _____20-25 _____26-29 _____30-35 _____36-39 _____40-45
   _____46-49 _____50 and over

3. What year are you in the MBA program?
   _____1st year _____2nd year_____Other (please explain)

4. What is your current student status?
   _____Full-time (nine hours or more) _____Part-time (less than nine hours)

5. What libraries do you use for your business school work and research? (check **ALL** that apply)
   _____KSU academic library _____Local public library _____Other academic
   _____Special/corporate library _____None of these
   _____Other (please specify)

6. Which one of the above libraries do you use the most?
   _____KSU _____Local _____Other academic _____Special _____None

7. What means of access do you use to search for information? (please rank using only **ONE** 'x' corresponding to each resource - '1' indicates frequently, '2' indicates infrequently, '3' indicates never)

	Frequently	Infrequently	Never
Ask library staff	_____	_____	_____
Ask a Professor	_____	_____	_____
Use a Computer	_____	_____	_____
Microforms	_____	_____	_____
Home/Office Modem	_____	_____	_____

8. What materials do you tend to use when searching for information? (please rank using only **ONE** 'x' corresponding to each resource)

	Frequently	Infrequently	Never
Books in stacks	_____	_____	_____
Bound Periodicals	_____	_____	_____
Business Reference Books	_____	_____	_____
Current Periodicals	_____	_____	_____
Dissertations and Theses	_____	_____	_____
Government Documents	_____	_____	_____
Newspapers	_____	_____	_____

9. For what type of information do you most frequently search?

_____Information about industries
_____Information about companies
_____Information about specific product(s)
_____Business theory

10. Have you used any of the following (please mark **ALL** that apply)

Compaq Disclosure	____Yes	____No	____Not sure
Lexis/Nexis	____Yes	____No	____Not sure
ABI/Inform	____Yes	____No	____Not sure
Inter-library Loan	____Yes	____No	____Not sure
OhioLink Loan	____Yes	____No	____Not sure

11. When searching online for references how many do you usually print?

___0 ___1-10 ___11-20 ___21-30 ___31+

12. Please indicate which of the following information sources you rely on in your studies (mark only **ONE** category for each item):

	Very Important	Little Importance	Not Important
Books	____	____	____
Periodicals (magazines, newspapers)	____	____	____
Online Library Catalog	____	____	____
Materials From Professor/Teacher	____	____	____
Books or Course Packs Purchased for the Class	____	____	____
Computer Databases (ABI/Inform, Disclosure, Lexis/Nexis)	____	____	____

13. What database do you use most frequently? (choose only **ONE**)

____Compaq Disclosure ____ABI/Inform ____Lexis Nexis
____Periodical Abstracts ____Dissertations and Abstracts ____None
_____Other (please specify)

14. Do you think that your future employer will require you to conduct any type of research or study when employed after graduation, (e.g. to analyze a scenario; provide projections?

____Highly likely ____Likely ___Unlikely

15. Do you think that some kind of formal research training about business resources to improve your skills would be

____Highly useful ____Somewhat useful ____Not necessary

16. Have you conducted any searches related to business on the Internet? (this includes all WWW, Telnet, Gopher, FTP sites or any means of access to the Internet)

____Yes ____No

17. Were you successful in obtaining the information for which you search via the Internet?

____Yes ____No

18. After graduation from the Kent State University MBA program, where do you intend to be employed? (choose only **ONE**)

____In Ohio ____In Another State within the United States of America
____Foreign Country ____Undecided

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, Thomas J. and Michael S. Scott Morton. 1994. **Information Technology and the Corporation of the 1990s**. Oxford University Press.

Bigelow, John D. 1991. **Managerial Skills**. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Brace, William. 1989. "Providing Information for and to Business Students." **Education for Information**. Vol. 7, December, 343-354.

Chen, Ching-chih and Peter Hernon. 1982. **Information Seeking**. New York, N. Y.: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc.

Cronin, Mary J. 1994. **Doing Business on the Internet: How the Electronic Highway is Transforming American Companies**. New York, N. Y.: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Dyer, Hilary and Gwyneth Tseng. 1988. **New Horizons for the Information Profession**. London, United Kingdom: Taylor Graham and Contributors.

Edwards, Doralyn Hickey. 1994. "The Information Needs of MBA Students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Thesis: Kenar-Flagler Business School.

Kibirige, Harry M. 1983. **The Information Dilemma: A Critical Analysis of Information Pricing and the Fees Controversy**. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Maura, Mariano Antonio. 1993. "A Study of the Informational Needs of Managers in the Private Manufacturing Industry in Puerto Rico." Thesis. University of Pittsburgh.

Robertson, Martyn. 1990. **Towards the Twenty-First Century**. Manchester, United Kingdom: Nadamal Books.

Sheridan, Jean. 1985. "Teaching Tough Stuff: Teaching Part-Time MBAs to Use a Library." **Research Strategies**. Vol. 3, No. 4. Fall, 184-190.

Toffler, Alvin. 1980. **The Third Wave**. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.

White, D. A. 1986 . "Information Use and Needs in Manufacturing Organizations: Organizational Factors in Information Behaviour." **International Journal of Information Management**. Vol. 6, 157-170.

Whitlatch, Jo Bell. 1983 . "Library Use Patterns Among Full- and Part-Time Faculty and Students." **College and Research Libraries**. Vol. 44, No. 2. March, 141-152.

Wilson, Tom. 1987 . "Information Business: The Business of Information." **Aslib Proceedings**. Vol. 39, No. 10. October, 275-279.